
Title: The Cremation of Sam McGee

Author: Segellion

There are strange
things done in the
midnight sun, by the
men who toil for gold;
The frozen trails
have their secret trails,
that would make your
blood run cold;
The northern lights
have seen queer
sights but the
queerest they ever
did see. Was the night
on the marge of Lake
Lebargue I cremated
Same McGee.
Now Sam McGee was
from Skara Brae,
where the cotton
blooms and blows.
Why he left his home
in the South to roam
'round the pole, god
only knows .
He was always cold,
but the land of gold
seemed to hold him
like a spell;
Though he'd often say
in his homely way
that he'd sooner live in
hell.
On a Christmas Day
we were mushing our
way over the Dawson
Trail. Talk of your
cold! through the
parka's fold it stabbed
like a driven nail.
If our eyes we'd close,
the the lashes froze
till sometimes we
couldn't see;
wasn't much fun, but
the only one to
whimper was Sam
McGee.

And that very night,
as we lay packed tight
in our robes beneath
the snow,
And the dogs were
fed, and the stars
o'erhead were dancing
heel and toe,
He turned to me, and
'Cap', says he, 'ill cash
in this trip I guess;
And if I do, i'm asking
that you won't refuse
my last request.
Well he seemed so low
that I couldn't say no;
then he says with a
sort of moan:
It's the cursed cold,
and it's got right hold,
till I'm chilled clean
through the bone.
Yet 'taint being dead
it's my awful dread of
the icy grave that
pains;
I want you swear that,
foul or fair, you'll
cremate my last
remains.
A pal's last need is a
thing to heed, so I
swore I would not fail;
And we started on at
the streak of dawn;
but God! he looked
ghostly pale.
Crouched on the
sleigh, and he raved
all day of his home in
Skara Brae;
And before nightful a
corpse was all that
was left of Sam
McGee.

There wasn't a breath
in that land of death,
and I hurried,
horror-driven,
With a corpse half hid
that I couldn't get rid,
because of a promise
given;
It was lashed to the
sleigh, and it seemed

to say: 'you may tax
your brawn and
brains,
But you promised
true, and it's up to
you, to cremate those
last remains.

Now a promise made
is a debt unpaid, and
the trail has it's own
stern code.
In the days to come,
though my limbs were
numb, in my heart
now I cursed that load.
The long, long night,
by the lone firelight,
while the huskies,
round in a ring,
Howled at their woes
to the homeless snows
Oh God! how I loathed
the thing.
And every day that
quiet clay seemed to
heavy and heavier
grow;
And on I went though
the dogs were spent
and the grub was
getting low;
The trail was bad, and
I felt half mad, but I
swore I would not give
in;
And i'd often sing to
the hateful thing, and
it harkened with a
grin.
Till I came to the
marge of Lake
Lebarge, and a derelict
there lay;
It was jammed in the
ice, but I saw in a
traice it was called the
'Alice May'
And I looked at it, and I
thought a bit, and I
looked at my frozen
chum;
Then 'Here', said I,
with a sudden cry, 'is
my crematorium'

Some planks I tore
from the cabin floor,

and I lit the boiler
fire;
Some coal I found that
was lying around, and
I heaped the fuel
higher;
The flames just
soared, and the
furnace roared such a
blaze you seldom see;
And I burrowed a hole
in the glowing coal and
I stuffed in Sam
McGee.

Then I made a hike,
for I didn't like to hear
him sizzle so;
And the heavens
scowled, and the
huskies howled and
the wind began to
blow.
It was icy cold, but the
hot sweat rolled down
my cheeks and I don't
know why;
And the greasy smoke
in an inky cloak went
streaking down the
sky.
Do not know how long
in the snow I wrestled
with grisly fear;
But the stars came out
and they danced about
ere I ventured near;
I was sick with dread,
but I bravely said: I'll
just take a peep
inside.
I guess he's cooked,
and it's time I look'
...then the door opened
wide
And there sat Sam,
cool and calm, in the
heart of the furnace
roar;
And he wore a smile
you could see a mile,
and said: 'please close
that door.
It's fine in here, but I
greatly fear, you'll let
in the cold and storm
Since I left the
Plumtrees, down in

Skara Brae, it's the
first time i've been
warm.

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(Robert W. Service)
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